UNITY. FREEDOM.

THE

Unitarian

MONTHLY.

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

FAITH. FELLOWSHIP.

No. 60. [Vol. V.—9] September, 1908. ONE PENNY.

Mr. BERTRAM TALBOT.

Mr. Bertram Talbot, the first Unitarian Van Lay Missionary, is a direct descendant of the Unitarian scholar and divine, Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801). Born at Nottingham, 1873. After six years' attendance at Anglican churches in connection with two boarding-schools he left with distinct leanings towards the theology of the Established Church, but coming under the influence of Robert Spears, avowed himself a Unitarian at the age of twenty-one, since when he has been a member of the Highgate congregation. Mr. Talbot has contributed many short articles to "The Christian Life," and to this Monthly. He is the author of a useful booklet, "Information Concerning the History and Growth of the Bible," and a widely distributed tract on "The Influence of Thought on Character." He was one of the original subscribers towards the cost of the projected Van Mission, and volunteered to accompany the Van on its experimental tour, resigning a secretarial appointment to a well-known public man in order to do so. Subsequently he was appointed the lay missioner, in which capacity he travelled in Yorkshire and Lancashire in 1906, and in the counties of Huntingdon, Bedford, Hertford, Essex, Kent, etc., in 1907. Mr. Talbot was present at every one of the meetings held with the Van in 1906, and likewise at all meetings with Van No. 3 in 1907. To these particulars from "The Christian Life" it may be added that Mr. Talbot is now in charge of Van No. 4, which left Manchester in the middle of May, and has travelled through Cheshire and Shropshire, and is now in Staffordshire, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham.

Varieties.

It is to me one of the most cruel and inhuman things that is ever done, to make a man an outcast from Christian society and sympathy, who, sincerely seeking to know the truth about God, and the soul, and immortal life, still has to tell us he cannot believe it. —Robert Collyer.

Make the larger faith your own:
The power is with you in the night
That makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone.
—Tennyson.

If God visits the sins, he also visits the holiness, of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. —Robert Collyer.

"Not worlds on worlds in phalanx deep,
Need we to prove that God is here;
The daisy fresh from nature's sleep,
Tells of his hand in lines as clear."

One God, whose nature is goodness and love; the oneness of man with God, and, therefore the immortality of the soul, and the final triumph of good over evil in the universe. These are not dogmas: they are the Eternal truths about which dogmas are made.
—Stopford A. Brooke.

Not Understood.

Not understood, we move along asunder,
Our paths grow wider as the seasons creep
Along the years; we marvel and we wonder
Why life is life, and then we fall asleep—
Not understood.

Not understood, we gather false impressions,
And hug them closer as the years go by,
Till virtues often seem to us transgressions;
And thus men rise and fall, and live and die—
Not understood.

Not understood, poor souls with stunted vision
Oft measure giants by their narrow gauge;
The poisoned shaft of falsehood and derision
Are oft impelled 'gainst those who mould the age—
Not understood.

Not understood, the secret springs of action
Which lie beneath the surface and the show
Are disregarded; with self-satisfaction
We judge our neighbours, and they often go—
Not understood.

Not understood. How trifles often change us!
The thoughtless sentence or the fancied slight
Destroy long years of friendship, and estrange us,
And on our souls there falls a freezing blight—
Not understood.

Not understood. How many breasts are aching
For lack of sympathy! Ah! day by day
How many cheerless, lonely hearts are breaking
How many noble spirits pass away—
Not understood.

Oh God! that men would see a little clearer,
Or judge less harshly where they cannot see;
Oh, God! that men would draw a little nearer
To one another: they'd be nearer Thee—
And understood.

—ANON.

The Soul Wins.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle," "For All or None," &c.

CHAPTER IX.

The trial of the two men took place and they were acquitted. No robbery could be proven. And the manner in which Jim McCracken gave his evidence quite carried the court in favour of the defendants. For it was clear that Jim had cause of personal complaint against the men for attempting to injure him, and in the face of the fact Jim's eager testimony in support of their innocence had great weight in the arriving at the verdict of "Not guilty."

The evidence at the trial too revealed the poverty and privation of the men and their families, and evoked much sympathy for their lot, so that a well-to-do farmer who had followed the case with interest, offered them both regular employment, which they readily accepted, thus entering on a brighter prospect.

Peter Bream, Patty's father, and John McCracken, Jim's parent, got quite chatty over this trial. Their young people having been very prominent in the case and their names coupled frequently together, gave their paternal parents a common interest therein.

"I'm bound to say, Mr. McCracken, that I really admire the part your son has taken in this business. He has shewn himself a man, he has indeed."

"Thank you, Mr. Bream, I'm glad you think so well of him. He has certainly taken a fair course throughout. I thought once that the police were going to fix their suspicions on him, but he has proved himself better than that. Yet he might have had much more trouble in the matter if it had not been for the plucky way in which your daughter behaved. She's one in a thousand, Mr. Bream, and I'm sure you're proud of her."

"Well, being as you say it, I admit I am. Our Patty has put on a brave face in the affair, and I'm right glad it has ended so well. But your Jim seems to have altered a lot since he returned; I consider he has improved amazingly. Why the very people who were inclined to speak slightingly of him now look up to him with respect and admiration. I congratulate you neighbour McCracken, I do."

"Thanks again. You're very kind. I must say that since he came home he hasn't given us a moment's unpleasantness. He's right enough. He'd never ha' left home at all except for an unfortunate outburst o' nasty temper on my part, Mr. Bream. I confess that much, and I've come to see it since, what a fool I've been. But it's been a lesson to me; and I'm admitting and confessing to you what I've admitted to nobody else, not even to my own wife. But it eases my mind to make a clean breast of it to somebody.'

"Ne'er mind, Mr. McCracken, we're none of us perfect, and it is good for us to know it, and all the better when we're not too proud to see it. I'm sure it does your heart good to know what great satisfaction your son is giving to his employer. I met Mr. Edmonds only the other day, and he praised him up to the skies. He said he'd never had such a manager and that he wouldn't part with him for anything."

"Did he say that? Well, it was very good of him, and to say it to you of all men."

"Why to me 'of all men'"?

'Well you know perhaps, between ourselves, Mr. Bream, Jim seems to have an attachment to your Patty, and if that comes to anything more it is a good thing that Patty's father should think well of him."

"And I do think well of him."

"I'm right pleased you do. And I know that his friendship with Patty has done him a world of good. In my opinion, Mr. Bream, she's one for any father to be thankful for."

"She is neighbour, she is; and I admit it though she is my own daughter. She's a treasure at home, and I can assure you, I don't know what our home would be like without her. I hope we shall keep her with us a long time yet."

"I'm sure you do, and quite natural you should. We shouldn't like to part with our Jim now. He's come to be quite a comfort to us at home. But we never know, do we, what the future has in store for us. In the natural course of things, changes come, and we shall see what we shall see."

Recent events had also effected a more complete understanding between Jim and Patty. Misgivings and uncertainty about each other had been cleared away. Jim knew now that he loved Patty, and he hoped that his affection was not unrequited. Patty on her part had more faith than ever in Jim. She had been surprised into ardent admiration of him by his recent conduct, and this added to the warm interest in him which she had felt for some time previously, strengthened her feelings toward him so that in reality they were at least akin to love. She did not confess so much to herself.

At dusk, only a day or two after the trial, Jim was returning home from his day's business, and took a short cut across the fields. He was in deep thought concerning Patty. He was feeling that his passion for her would soon compel him to declare himself. In the field through which he was passing was a large pool of water. So wrapt was he in his own thoughts that he saw no one else. His eyes were on the ground and a dim form moving not far away did not attract his attention. But in a moment he heard a heavy splash which startled him. He found himself near to Todd's pool, and having rushed to the side he saw in the water what appeared to be a man. He threw off his own coat and dashed into the pool to the struggling form. He reached it, dragged it out, and laid it on the grass, and when he saw the face it was that of old Jasper Toone.

(To be continued.)

Literature.

"God in San Dam," by F. Blount Mott, Author of "Before the Crisis," etc., Six Shillings. Greening and Co., Ltd., London.

Mr. Mott is known to many of our readers as late minister at Southport, and at the present located with the Unitarian Church at Cardiff. His first novel, "Before the Crisis," had a very favourable reception both here and in America, and this second venture is certain to further advance the reputation of the author in the high estimation of the reading public. It is a striking story. The plot is laid in a rough border settlement apparently west of Kansas, U.S.A. A kind of town government is established; there is a Calvinistic Church, but the inhabitants, including even the church deacons, are nearly all "on the make," immersed in financial speculation—openly or secretly engaged in outwitting each other in the world game of "grab," some of them given over to gambling and vice; and the church members and deacons, and town supervisors, while expressing disapproval of immorality and the dens where vicious practices are carried on—are in reality secretly protecting them from interference. Into the midst of these conditions there comes a young man fresh from College to be the minister, and the book is a graphic tale of the transformation brought about theologically, morally, and in local government by his personal influence, force of character, and resolute adherence to principle. It is a story of a religious faith, wholly unorthodox, wholly natural, simply Christlike, growing in strength through actual conflict with practical difficulties, and the evil conditions of a frontier town.

In analysis of motives and character, in descriptions of local conditions and the moral and social forces at work, Mr. Mott exhibits powers of a high order. With the most transparent clearness there are presented the play and by-play of moving personalities upon each other. In the midst of the hypocrisy, cant, and mutual deception of the community of San Dam, a few finer characters—the minister, Timothy Lamb, Mary Bossock, Owen Brown, and Belle Stephens—stand out in contrast with the scheming and the plotting of their neighbours. The regenerating power of natural and reasonable religion is exemplified here in personal instances, as well as in the reformation of the community. In the Lutz children the sweetness and joy of applied Christianity in the home is most beautifully depicted. The outcast negro woman, who was a drunkard and worse, becomes a new creature. Owen Brown, the sceptic, who railed at the orthodox God and denounced the churches, embraces rational Cnristianity.

Nearly all the elements that go to make a successful and powerful novel are here represented, and used by a skilful hand. The minister's love for Mary Bossock, and her engagement to Owen Brown, the ultimate dissolution of that engagement in an amicable manner after many complications, and the final union of Mary with the minister—is a tale that runs its course like a golden thread through the narrative. There are exciting scenes—the sermon against Calvinism which drew a large congregation; the minister locked out of his church and expelled from his ministry; the struggle of Owen Brown with the wild bronco pony to break it in and tame it to his will; the incident of Jeff and Baby Bird, the parson's visit to Johnnie's "den," and the marriage ceremony in the silence of the night on the common roadway outside the town—are events most powerfully drawn.

This might well be called a "New Theology" novel. If we mistake not, the book will attract widespread interest and have a great sale. Its excellence, motive, and dramatic characterisation merit the widest circle of readers. Mr. Mott has our warmest congratulations on the achievement of a remarkable success in the production of a story that not only enchains the interest of the reader from beginning to the end, but leaves upon the mind the grandest influences and the noblest lessons.

"He always wins who sides with God;
To him no chance is lost."

What to Teach.

VIII.—WHAT WE OWE.

"Owe no man anything, but love one another!" wrote the great apostle.

Ah, but to love one another is everything. If we owe that, we owe all that we have and all that we are. Pay your debts! is what Paul means when he says "Owe nothing but love." We do owe that—to our neighbour, to all our fellow-men. Let us pay what we owe.

Is it not said, too, that "we brought nothing into the world—neither can we carry anything out"? If we brought nothing into the world, not even ourselves, then we owe ourselves to some power other than ourselves—to God and humanity. Everything we have and are has been given to us. All the powers, faculties, possessions, we have, we have received. We did not make them. We can use them, we can develop them, we can employ them to good ends or to evil; but we did not create them nor get them by our own efforts. They were conferred upon us. We were endowed with them. They are the talents entrusted to our care. Entrusted—therefore held in trust for some other to whom they really belong. We ourselves are not our own, but we belong to God; we belong to humanity.

So if we ask: What do we owe? the answer must be again: Everything.

God has done for us all that has been done for our good. He has done it in many and in various ways, directly and indirectly. Much of what He has done for us is done through human instruments, through humanity. Therefore to Him and to mankind we owe all.

We have not made our bodies; we have not created our minds; we cannot make the grass of the fields, nor the food we eat, nor the material for clothing, nor the wood and stone for shelter. The simple flower of the field that appeals to a sense of the beautiful within us—we cannot make that. Our days would all be dark were there no sun, but we did not make the sun. The winds blow in refreshing breezes that bring a glow to our cheeks, but we have not created the winds.

We came into the world without any choice of our own. And we were weak and helpless; we could not feed ourselves; we could do nothing but cry aloud for help. Everything had to be done for us. Our parents had to care for us, provide for our wants, protect us from danger, guide our feet when we became stronger. What do we owe to them? More than we can repay.

As soon as we were able we went to school. There were teachers provided for our instruction; there were books out of which we were set to learn. We owe more to those teachers than we can tell; the books were written for us by others, not ourselves. And when, later, we could read, we found millions of books prepared for us, many of them by people long since dead. We went into the great school of life, and towns and cities containing schools, libraries, colleges, picture galleries, manufactories, wonderful machines, and an endless variety of institutions—all for us, for the supply of our wants, for the satisfaction of our needs. Is it possible to reckon up the vast extent of all we owe to mankind for what they have done for us?

History is filled with grand examples of heroes and saints, of benefactors and saviours, of martyrs who suffered that we might live, of brave and noble men and sweet and tender women who unreservedly gave themselves in self-denying service to mankind to make our day brighter than their own. The many courageous Reformers of all ages faced the bitterest opposition, suffered the most cruel ill-treatment and persecution, even to being put to death by the axe, by fire, by crucifixion—in order to sweep away evils, to clear the way from obstructions, and to make a better life possible for us to-day. Is not the debt we owe greater than we can ever pay? However that may be, let us never forget that we owe it, and that we ought never to shirk the attempt to pay back as much of it as lies in our power.

The very word "ought" means that we "owe it"; that other word "duty" means all that is "due," all that is "owing." If we have to pay all we owe, can our duty ever cease? Can we put a limit to what we ought to do for others, when others of the past and present generations have done so very much for us?

So, if we are strong, our strength is not our own only; it is given to us in trust, not merely for ourselves, but especially for those who are not strong. The strength of father and mother is for the helpless children as much as for themselves. The strength of the strong is given them to share with the lame, the crippled, the helpless, the aged, the infirm. If we are strong, we must not greedily keep our strength for ourselves; we must use it for those most lacking and most in need of it.

Whatever our strength is, or our ability, we owe it to others, and we must use it for others. We must use our sight to help the blind, our learning to assist the ignorant, our wisdom to guide the foolish into safer ways, our love to drive away other people's hate.

There is no sin worse than selfishness and greed; no wrong worse than refusal to do our duty and to pay back to mankind and to God as much as possible of what we owe. The great benefactors and saviours of mankind were never greedy for themselves, they did not do their good work grudgingly, they did not set a limit and say—that is our share of duty and we shall do no more—they did all in their power, and gave themselves without stint. They bravely endeavoured to pay their debt.

God and humanity do not demand of us more than we can do. But they do require all we can do, all we can give. They have a claim upon us to the utmost extent of our ability, because we owe it to them. It is a debt we should honourably pay. According to our ability: ability is the measure of our duty. More is due from the strong than from the weak; if we have less power, less is due from us.

From him to whom much is given much is required; from him to whom little is given little is required. From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.

Let us teach this conception of Duty. Let us make the grandest demands on the capacities of our young people. Let us tell them that God and humanity expect from them their best and highest.

Postal Mission Work.

By MISS FLORENCE HILL,

Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers 'Union.

Readers of the "Unitarian Monthly" may remember that there is a Postal Mission in Melbourne, in which the Central Postal Mission is deeply interested. We have been glad to receive a letter from Miss Barnard, the Hon. Secretary. She writes:—

"The advertisements in three Melbourne papers have been running now ten weeks. . . . I have had some interesting letters. Someone from New Zealand, not far from Auckland, wrote: 'I went to the Unitarian Church and Sunday School at Stockport (England), but since then, some 35 years ago, I have only had three opportunities of attending Unitarian Services, so that the pamphlets you send will be much appreciated by me." Another from a far-away corner of Victoria is particularly pleased to lend the pamphlets sent him, 'not to be criticised, but to be admired by all. They made a new man of me, and I shall be pleased to receive more books and tracts or anything you like to send." An application for Unitarian literature came from a remote part of the Northern Territory of Australia, from someone employed in smelting works. He says there are only about fifteen white men, the majority being Asiatics. He tries to instil some morality into these poor uncivilised people, and thinks that 'Unitarian doctrines may throw some light on the problem of their eternal existence.' He says 'the Gospel hardly ever reaches this part of the world.' This letter took more than a month to reach Melbourne! Another month will have to pass before he can receive the literature asked for!" Miss Barnard concludes by saying how welcome copies of the "Unitarian Monthly" are, and that she could dispose of as many copies as could be spared.

The Central Postal Mission is not advertising much at present, but we have been kept busy, more particularly issuing books from the Central Lending Library, though some people limit their reading to winter; others, on the contrary, make urgent appeals for books to read during a brief holiday; and some of the new and popular books by Harnack, Sabatier, and others are never on our shelves, as they are expected eagerly by a long list of readers.

We are glad to hear echoes again and again of the influence of the Van Mission. Such expressions as these often occur in the letters we receive. "I have listened this week to earnest and powerful addresses from the Van Missioners; their influence will long be felt in this place."

The August Monthly Sunday Afternoon Postal Mission Conference at Stepney was dedicated to the question of Peace. It was at the close of the great International Peace Congress, which had stirred the hearts of so many Londoners. Unitarians, above all others, ought to be strong in the cause of Peace. We should never forget that the Unitarians of last century were, together with the Quakers, the leaders in the Peace Movement. Channing's noble words are still remembered and quoted, and Emerson, with the insight of the prophet, recognised that the solution of the problem would be "International Arbitration," or as he termed it, "A Congress of Nations." At this time, when militarism has eaten so deeply into the heart of England, when boys are being pressed into cadet corps and banners are blessed in churches, there is more need than ever to keep our high ideals about Peace. Let us remember Emerson's noble words:—

"If peace is to be maintained, it must be by brave men, who have come up to the same height as the hero, namely, the will to carry their life in their hand, and stake it at any instant for their principle; but who have gone one step beyond the hero, and will not seek another man's life; men who have by their intellectual insight, or else by their moral elevation, attained such a perception of their own intrinsic worth that they do not think property of their own body sufficient good to be saved by such dereliction of principle as treating a man like a sheep. If the universal cry for reform of so many inveterate abuses, with which society rings; if the desire of a large class of young men for a faith and hope, intellectual and religious, such as they have not yet found, be an omen to be trusted; if the disposition to rely more on study and on action, on the unexplored riches of the human constitution—if the search of the sublime law of morals and the sources of hope and trust in man, and not in books—in the present, and not in the past—proceed; if the rising generation can be provoked to think it unworthy to nestle into every abomination of the past, and shall feel the generous darings of austerity and virtue; then war has a short day, and human blood will cease to flow."

In conclusion, I will only add that we hold these small and informal Postal Mission Conferences on the first Sunday of every month, at five o'clock, at College Chapel, Stepney Green, London, E., and are very glad indeed to see any religious inquirers or seekers after truth who are able to make their way there.

Unitarian congregations, if they are true to their principles and to their traditions, welcome every fresh gleam of truth and right revealed by God to the human mind and conscience, and seek to cultivate the natural pieties of the soul which never grow old. Unitarians affirm, in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

—W. Copeland Bowie.

Home Circle.

A MORNING PRAYER.—Almighty Father, I thank Thee for that tender provision of thy love, by which the wearied body renews its strength, and the mind is freshened and invigorated for duty. Thou hast given a new day: help me to redeem it from evil, by patient industry, by lawful pleasures, and by the keeping of Thy commandments. Give me the spirit of thoughtfulness for others and at the end of this day may I find joy in the knowledge of some wrong resisted, some good thing done, some kind word spoken, some one made happier or better by my patience, sympathy or kindly help. O God, create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me: a spirit of watchfulness, courage, righteousness, and love,—of life-inspiring faith in Thee such as was in Jesus Christ, Thy best and noblest son.—Amen.

As we meet and touch each day
The many travellers on our way,
Let every such brief contact be
A glorious helpful ministry;
The contact of the soil and seed,
Each giving to the other's need,
Each helping on the other's best,
And blessing each as well as blest.
—Susan Coolidge.

They say there is nothing which communicates itself so quickly in a family as an expression of coldness or discontent on the face of one of its members. This is not altogether true; there is something which communicates with equal rapidity and greater force —the smiling face, the happy heart.—(Gold Dust.)

"There may be glory in the might
That treadeth nations down—
Wreaths for the crimson warrior,
Pride for the kingly crown:
More glorious is the victory won
O'er self-indulgent lust;
The triumph of a brave resolve
That treads a vice in dust."

IT IS SAID THAT—

The Bright Side Club is still in existence.
It has never had a constitution or officers.
Its working methods are comprised in the following simple rules:—
(1) Look on the Bright Side.
(2) Count up your blessings.
(3) Do cheerfully the duty that lies nearest.
(4) Reach out and touch other lives to brightness.
—A. W. Brotherton.

BEWARE!

Beware, lest you lose respect for yourself.
Beware, lest you forget the respect due to others.
Beware, boys, and never behave loosely, cheaply, in a common or ungentlemanly way, to girls.
Beware, girls, lest you do not command respect, lest you hold yourselves common and cheap.
Beware! put a high value on purity, on virtue, on a good name, on good character.
Beware, parents, lest you set a loose example; and may your children never bring you shame.

JOHNNIE.

Two gentlemen travelling in Scotland went out on a botanical expedition with a little boy named Johnnie as their guide. Looking over some cliffs they perceived some very rare plants growing at a great depth below. They asked Johannie if he would allow himself to be lowered over the cliff with a rope to get the specimens, offering him a large reward. At first he refused, then he considered the great poverty of his parents and what the reward would do for them, and consented to go down and get the plants on one condition, 'That my father holds the rope.' This was agreed upon, a rope obtained, the father fetched, who held the rope and lowered Johnnie over the cliffs. The plants were secured, Johnnie was drawn up in safety, and received his reward. Happy is any boy who is made safe by faith in a good father. Happier are we all if we believe in God, the Father of all, and live and work by faith in Him.

Merciful and Brave.

Once I read in the life of Dr. Channing, ;who was one of the best men that ever lived, what he once did when he was a boy. Little Channing was one of the kindest and most tender-hearted boys I ever heard of. One day he found in a bush a nest full of young birds just out of the shell—little, tiny, downy things, with hardly more feathers than an oyster. And when he touched them with his finger, to feel how soft and warm they were, they all began to gape. So what did he do but run right away, get some nice soft crumbs, and feed them; and after that, every time school was out, he ran to feed his birds.

But one day, when he went to the nest, there it lay on the ground, torn and bloody, and the little birds all dead, and the father bird was crying on the wall, and the mother bird was crying on a tree. Then little Channing tried to tell them that he did not kill their poor young brood; that he never could do such a mean, cruel thing as that; that he had tried to feed them, and help them along, so they might fly. But it was no use; he talked baby talk to them. They could not understand him, but just kept on crying; so then he sat down and cried too. Now this was the sort of boy Channing was.

One day he heard of a big boy beating a little one. Channing was a little boy; he was a little man when he was full grown but then he had a big soul. I was going to say he had a soul as big as a church; but indeed his soul was bigger than all the churches in the world;—and when he heard of that, he went right to the boy, ever so much larger than he was,and said "Did you strike that little boy?" "Yes, I did; and what then?" "Then," said Channing, "you are a coward, because he was no match for you; and now

am going to whip you for doing it." Because he had a big soul, though he was a small boy, he went in, and did handsomely; and that was the only time he ever fought in his life. And I honour him more for it than if he had never fought at all. I like peace. Never fight if you can help it; but never strike a boy who is no match for you, and never stand by quietly while another boy is doing it. Great men were all that sort. Brave as lions, true as steel, with kind hearts for doves and ravens and sparrows, they would never tear birds' nests, or sling stones trying to kill birds, because they felt as Jesus did when he said, "Blessed are the merciful."—Robert Collyer, in "Tender, Trusty and True."

Shutting Out Light.

BIBLE IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The Bible and Sunday schools were the main subjects discussed recently by the International Congregational Council in Edinburgh.

The Rev. Dr. W. H. Bennett (London) spoke upon the positive value of criticism to the Bible. Modern criticism ,he said, tried to find out what the inspired writers said, what they meant by it, what it meant to the people to whom it was addressed, and how it was interpreted by authors and commentators. Surely as followers of Christ they were bound to believe that in the long run it was right and necessary and helpful to know the truth. Modern criticism had given working men a reasonable faith to defend.—(Applause.)

The Rev. Dr. Charles R. Brown (California) said that criticism had absolutely closed the debate on certain questions. The coarse attacks on inspiration made by Paine, Ingersoll, and Bradlaugh had become altogether impossible for our day and generation.

The Rev. Dr. Adeney (Manchester), in an address on Sunday school reform in the use of the Bible, said that foolish antiquated methods of Bible teaching provided the soil in which the sceptical writer sowed his seed. The historical method of study had lit up the Bible with a new splendour, but that had been most carefully curtained off from the Sunday school as dangerous if not fatal to piety. Was it kind or just or reasonable to require the next generation to go back to our starting point and wearily fight their way over the same ground? The removal of Bible teaching from the public elementary schools he would regard as a national disaster.—(Applause) In the Sunday school the Bible was the essential text book, but the antiquated method of teaching had led to the inference that the Bible was an antiquated book. He would have the children taught that the Bible was inspired of God, and was thus apart from other books a precious treasure, but not that the Bible was verbally infallible. He would never discuss the question of verbal infallibility with children—never put the notion into their heads. The mischief had been that inspiration was assumed to imply infallibility, and the result was that disproof of infallibility had thrown doubt on inspiration.

In the course of the discussion the Rev. Thomas Lloyd (Colwyn Bay) said that while personally he was thankful for the enlightenment of the addresses, he believed the Bible had been greatly belittled. They had almost explained God out of it altogether.

The Rev. Dr. Forsyth (London) said that he would like to see a restoration of the old catechetical system.—(Applause.) He thought slipshod belief more dangerous than erroneous belief. In reply to Mr. Lloyd, Dr. Forsyth said that it was not a case of setting the Spirit against the scholars, for if the scholars of the Bible were not made critics by the Spirit of God they had no business to be critics at all.—(Applause.)

"John Bull" and the "Christian."

The following has appeared in an issue of "John Bull"—"We have received a copy of the 'Christian,' containing an article on the late George Jacob Holyoake. In it the uprightness and unselfishness of the veteran reformer's life 'on the secular side,' and his genuine interest in the 'physical' betterment of the people are admitted. But the article proceeds: 'As a boy, Mr. Holyoake attended the ministry of John Angell James, at Birmingham. Had he continued there, he would surely have come into the possession of knowledge concerning God that would for him have been eternal life. But the boy went off to the Unitarians, where the Deity of Christ is suppressed. The only way of knowing God is through our Lord Jesus Christ. That means destroyed, the result also is destroyed. And George Jacob Holyoake's negation of things Evangelical must be put to the account of those who offer men husks instead of bread.' In the same issue there is a column of fulsome adulation of Dr. Torrey—with no reference to the cowardly manner in which he foully slandered the memories of Paine and Ingersoll. No, no! It will not do Mr. 'Christian'. If the husks produce Holyoakes, we would ten thousand times rather feed on them than on the bread that developes Torreys. A man who is 'upright on the secular side' is good enough for us. The fault with so many upright people 'on the spiritual side' is that their mundane morals are so often rather weak. The 'Christian' evidently thinks that our revered kinsman has gone to perdition—a result which, apparently, would have been the same even if he had remained an Unitarian. We prefer to cherish the closing words of an address delivered at his funeral by a life-long friend: 'I know not what may be Beyond, but if there be a place where the good and true and pure are gathered, and it should be my lot, by God's grace, to enter—this, at least, I know—there I shall find George Jacob Holyoake.'"

In the above, "John Bull" no doubt clearly reflects the common sense view held by the man in the street. The "husks" are "the things Evangelical," and the "bread" is the reasonable Gospel of the Unitarians. Who says that the old Orthodoxy is dead and that our work is done? Fancy it being held by any "Christian" in the 20th Century that "the only way of knowing God is through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Is God unknowable to those who have never heard of Jesus?

Our Sermonette.

THE TWO HARVESTS.

(Abbreviated from "The Life That Now Is.")
By the Rev. ROBERT COLLYER (U.S.A.).

"Fruit unto God."—Rom. VII., 4.

It has come to me to say something of the lesson that lies within our harvest touching the harvest of life, and to try, if I can, to find what is fruit unto God. What is fruit unto us, is a question not very hard to answer; but fruit to God, I propose to show, is unspeakably more, look at it was we will, than what is fruit to us.

First, then, we have to notice the difference every harvest-time brings home to us, between our conception and that of the Divine Providence, of what is really good fruit in the measure of it. . . We see it is not merely this granary of ours that is full; there is another granary besides this, in which a harvest is stored of seed for sowing, and bread for eating, to which this of ours is a mere handful, and all this is as good in its way as the fruit and corn on which we have come to set such store. . . Our good fruit in this light is one thing, his good fruit another; and so as the heavens are higher than the earth, His thought of what is good must be higher than our own.

Whatever we may think of the thorns and thistles that come up outside Eden to curse the land, what God said was good, when he made the earth bring forth grass and the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-trees yielding fruit after their kind, is good still; there has been no debasement of this Divine husbandry; no empty granary of God; no failure of the field. . .

This is true again, when we turn from the vastness of this treasure to its variety. . . . I have no idea of what was grown in Eden; but I know that if Eden did not grow such a variety in its harvests as this that now blesses all civilised men, it was not so good a place to live in, in some respects, as this city, and would not be so likely to satisfy the whole demand of our life. Let this be as it may, the variety that we ourselves take note of is as divine as the abundance. Yet it is but a fragment of the whole variety that is harvested in the garners of God. . . There is a vast store of things that ripen every harvest, we know very little about, or take to be worthless, but in their own place and for their own purpose they are all good fruits.

So it is again when we turn from the harvest to the harvest-time. The truth is, ever since the snowdrop came up through the snow, and blessed us in the wild spring weather, there has been a perpetual ingathering of ripe things. The spring blossoms ripened. . . . The first fruits of summer came—in June, or not at all; other fruits—in August. The completeness of harvest, then, is in the great span of it; and we only understand the whole truth of what is fruit unto God, when we understand and feel how good it is for our life to take in this long ripening, together with the vastness and variety. . . . This then is the truth about the harvest we are completing. We have one measure for it; He who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds has another. We gather a few varieties; he bids nature and his angels gather all.

I said the harvest of the year leads us on to the harvest of life; the vastness, and variety, and difference in the ripening of humanity, and the difference between our estimate of it and the estimate of Heaven. In my boyhood, when I listened to sermons, and through some years of the time I preached them, my idea of the harvest of Humanity, and what is good fruit to God, was very simple. A long narrow strip in the great wilderness of the world bore good fruit, all the rest was left to grow things whose end is to rot, or to be burned. That was the way I was taught to believe in the harvest of Humanity—the good fruit that the angels gathered; and, God forgive me, it was the way I tried to teach others. . . .

It is by no means the exclusive task of liberal Christianity now to deny this wretched, narrow dogma; the best preachers of every faith in Christendom are proclaiming the truth our preachers were among the first to proclaim from the pulpit, that fruit unto God is grown and gathered in every nation, and kindred, and people and tongue. That Assyria, and Egypt, and Greece, and Rome, and Arabia, and Ethiopia, and Scandinavia, and old Gaul bore their harvests as certainly as the Hebrew and Christian lands. That what the church and the preacher insisted on as the true harvest exclusively is only the harvest of a few varieties, of which the noblest Christian fruit is no doubt the best of all; but that finds its full perfection, too, in what it draws from all the rest. . . .

We are gradually coming to the conviction again, that this is the truth about the Divine ingathering to-day—what is fruit unto God, good men in all churches and out of them are saying, cannot be this small handful alone in the Christian garner. That is no doubt the best whenever it comes to its full perfection, but there is a divine reaping where the Christian seed was never sown. . . . There is not a nation or people anywhere that is not, according to its variety, bringing forth fruit to God—something good answering to its condition, as truly as the harvests answer to the zones of the world. It is not our sort; perhaps we cannot see what use there is in it; it is not our business. What we have to do is to make the best of the corner of the vineyard the Master has given us, and then to believe that he will see to the rest, and will not let it run to waste. . . . .

What I have said about Christian ideas of the multitudes of heathens all the world over, I must insist on in connection with those in our own land, who are not Christians, and never will be. I can no more believe that the mere handful of our countrymen who are gathered into churches are all that are going to be gathered into heaven, than that the barns and cellars of this country hold all the good that has ripened this fall. I am the last man, I trust, to say a word that shall seem to make the

Christian faith and the Christian Church anything else but what it is. What I will say is this, that the religious life is by no means confined to the Christian faith and churches. There is a very great deal we never think of calling religion, that is still fruit unto God, and garnered by Him in the harvest. . . . In all sorts of husks and shells, hard, sharp, withered, and dead, God sees a goodness we are always missing, and counts and treasures it in the granary of heaven.

It is not for a moment my idea, that because the great Husbandman will certainly make the best of the multitudes that are like the wild fruit of the wilderness, and of those that are like the smaller and more ordinary growth of the field and forest, and of all the rest we have been in the habit of leaving out of the measure of good fruit to God—we are to be satisfied with anything short of the uttermost goodness, largeness, and ripeness we can possibly attain to. . . . It is always the danger of our confidence in God's providence, that we shall come to think it will be satisfied with our improvidence. Only as we make the best of what we have, and so become the best we can be, shall we win the great "well-done"; and no man or woman ought ever to be satisfied with anything less than to try for it. Patience, perseverance, good endeavour through storm and shine, the uplifted heart, the pure life, the large sympathy, the faith that was in Christ, and the truth and the love—these will bring into my own life an ever-ripening perfection, and save me from the poor perversity of thinking that God has not an infinite store of fruit as good as mine or better.

"So will I gather strength and hope anew,
For I do know God's patient love perceives,
Not what we did, but what we tried to do;
And though the ripened ears be sadly few,
He will accept our sheaves."

Notes and News.

The Unitarian Van Mission still goes triumphantly on its way. Already in the middle of August the total numbers in attendance at the meetings with the four vans exceed the whole of the attendances last season with the same vans up to the end of September.

A united botanical ramble of friends of the two Burnley churches, with others from Nelson, under the leadership of Mr. H. Hyde, of Manchester, took place Saturday, July 18th.

Forty-four scholars of the Holbeck (Leeds) Sunday School have received prizes from the Yorkshire Unitarian Sunday School Union for passing examinations in subjects of Sunday school instruction.

Mrs. John Dale, wife of the minister, conducted an anniversary service at Selby, and preached the sermon, on a recent Sunday; and Mrs. Ginever, wife of the Rev. C. A. Ginever, B.A., of Dover, was special preacher at Wakefield; Miss Stewart, of Exeter, was special anniversary preacher at Shepton Mallet on July 26th; two ladies—Mrs. Joyce and Mrs. Chapman—conducted services at Coalville July 26th and Aug. 1st; and Mrs. Granville has been reading the lessons at Kilburn.

Mr. Councillor T. C. Abbott, vice-chairman of the Libraries Committee of the Manchester City Council, and an active Unitarian, has been made a J.P. for Manchester.

The British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the National Conference of Unitarian Churches were both represented by delegates at the Universal Congress of Peace in London, July 27th—Aug. 1st.

A fire has done considerable damage to the schoolroom attached to the Swansea Unitarian Church, the roof having been burnt entirely away.

Very gratifying reports of the church at Wellington, New Zealand, include news that the new building fund reaches £1,400.

The congregation of Hyde Chapel, Gee Cross, will celebrate the bicentenary of the original chapel in October, and is marking the event by raising £2,000—half for endowment and half for structural repairs and improvements—and without a bazaar.

In the week August 10th—16th the Van Mission reached its highest records. One Van in Scotland, 7 meetings and a total of 10,500 aggregate attendances; one Van in Wales, 7 meetings, attendances 4,250; two Vans in England, 11 meetings, attendances 10,520; four Vans, 25 meetings, total attendances 25,270.

The summer meeting of the Midland Sunday School Association was held at Holywood, Saturday, July 18th, and the annual service in the Birmingham Town Hall, Sunday afternoon, July 19th; 3,000 children and adults present.

The annual meeting of the Southern Unitarian Association was held at Ringwood on Thursday, July 16th.

The Eastern Union of Unitarian Churches had its annual meeting July 23rd at Bury St. Edmunds, when the local Church Gate Street Chapel was reopened after renovations and structural improvements.

MINISTERIAL EVENTS: The Rev. R. J. Hall, M.A., from Manchester College, Oxford, has been inducted to the ministry at Ansdell, Lytham, July 18th. The Rev. A. Thornhill, M.A., has accepted appointment to Friar Gate Chapel, Derby; the Rev. E. I. Fripp, B.A., of Clifton, has accepted an invitation to the ministry of the Great Meeting, Leicester; Rev. William Wilson has accepted appointment to Unity Church, Gateshead; Mr. Delta Evans, Editor of "The Christian Life," has accepted a pressing invitation to conduct evening services at Peckham for six months; Rev. W. H. Rose, of Walthamstow, has accepted appointment as missionary at Rhyl Street Domestic Mission, London; Mr. Samuel Evans Bowen, of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, has accepted appointment as minister at Crumlin, co. Antrim, Ireland; Rev. Wm. Evans has resigned from the Congregational Church, Dolgelly, N. Wales, in order to prepare for entry into the Unitarian ministry.

DEATHS: Mr. W. R. Lake, of Sutton, Surrey, July 19th; Mr. Frederick Pinnock, of Newport, I.W., July 16th, 54; Mr. A. W. Hutton, of Belfast, July 10th; Mr. Austin Kime, of Boston, July 25th, 81; Mrs. Lloyd, widow of a former principal of Carmarthen Presbyterian College, July 26th; Mrs. Murray, widow of Rev. John Murray, of Ilminster, Somerset, July 23rd; Mr. Ald. J. Barker Ellis, of Newcastle, Aug. 1st, 71; Mrs. James Smith, late of Crumpsall, July 31st, 72; Mr. C. L. Whitham, assistant Inspector-General of Schools, Adelaide, Australia, and formerly Unitarian minister at Christ Church, Peas Hill, Nottingham, aged 62; Mr. John Atkins, J.P., of Hinckley, Aug. 5th, 79; Miss Janet B. Gaskell, of Highgate, Aug. 7th, 19; Mrs. Greaves, wife of the Rev. Cyril A. Greaves, D.C.L., of Blean, near Canterbury, Aug. 5th, 78; Mr. Henry Turner, of Newland, Keymer, Sussex, Aug. 15th, 68; Mr. H. H. Stannus, F.R.I.B.A., Hindhead, Surrey, Aug. 18th, 68; Mr. H. R. McRobert, Ballynahinch, co. Down, Aug. 18th, 70; Mrs. K. G. Gupta, of the Brahmo Somaj, Aug. 15th, at South Kensington, 53; Rev. Thomas Lord (Congregationalist), of Horncastle, Aug. 21st, 100 years.

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